

Summary statistics showing the births, marriages and deaths in the nine provinces of Canada during 1920, with the birth, marriage and death rates as compared with the estimated population of that year are presented in Table 17. The figures for Quebec are taken from the provincial returns. The totals for the nine provinces are approximately equivalent to what they would be for the Dominion as a whole, since the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories, which are not as yet covered by the new scheme of vital statistics, contain between them less than 1-700th of the population of the Dominion. This summary table shows births, marriages, deaths, crude annual birth, marriage and death rates for the provinces, based upon the estimated population for 1920, as well as the excess of births over deaths. In Table 18 will be found an analysis of the birth statistics for the year, showing living births by sex, single births, births of twins and triplets, illegitimates, and still-births. The proportion of illegitimate to total living births in the eight provinces for which statistics were available was very low, 18 per 1,000.

In Table 19 are presented statistics of births, marriages and deaths in the principal cities of Canada for the calendar year 1920. Since the local estimates of population have been shown by experience to be sometimes seriously defective, the census populations, as shown by the Census of 1921, are included, and are taken as a basis for the determination of the annual natural increase per 1,000 population, this involving a slight under-estimate of the rate of natural increase.

Two important considerations should be borne in mind by the students who use either these tables or provincial reports for comparative purposes.

First, in spite of the improvements recently effected, registration generally, and the registration of births in particular, is not universally carried out. The great extent of the country, and the isolation of many of its inhabitants, partly account for this unsatisfactory situation.

Secondly, the great differences in the age and sex distribution of the population in different provinces, as shown by the Census of 1911, (these statistics are not yet available from the Census of 1921), make comparisons (of birth rates, for instance), as among the provinces unfair and misleading. Thus, for instance, in British Columbia in 1911, there were only 428 females of ages 15 to 49 to every 1,000 males of these ages, while in Quebec there were 972 and in Prince Edward Island 1,027. Evidently in view of the enormous disproportion between the sexes in British Columbia, the crude birth rate per 1,000 of population in that province cannot properly be compared with the crude birth rate in Quebec or Prince Edward Island. Again, in consequence of different age distributions of population in the different provinces—the Prairie Provinces, for instance, have a very young population because of the healthy young immigrants whom they attract—a comparison of crude death-rates of the provinces is misleading. In the Prairie Provinces, taken as a unit, only 126 per thousand of the 1911 population and 137 per thousand of the 1916 population had passed 45 years of age, while in Quebec 176,